

Date

Thursday 19 July 2007

Title of session

Workshop 1 - International Boundaries

Name of presenter/chair

Chair: James Kavanagh, Director, Land Group, Royal Institution of Chartered Surveyors, UK

Presenter: Martin Pratt, Director of Research, International Boundaries Research Unit, Durham University, UK

Rapporteurs

Nicholas Hutchings, Defence Geographic centre and Jenny Harding, Ordnance Survey

Presentation title: The role of the international community in boundary making

Boundary making as a term has been in use for a long time and has been defined in terms of 4 key elements: allocation, delimitation, demarcation and administration. IBRU (International Boundaries Research Institute) revise this model, in that allocation is redundant and administration is split into maintenance and management. Also the process of recovery is added, concerned with identifying as accurately as possible today where the boundary was originally established.

Unfortunately geographical expertise was rarely prominent when many of the world's land boundaries were first established; many boundaries were defined on the basis of limited geographic knowledge. Existing boundary definitions can be inadequate and this may be one of the main reasons why some of today's boundaries are contested or areas of friction.

Among the options available for boundary dispute resolution, mediation empowers the parties to retain control of the critical decisions that affect their interests.

Current boundary cases being handled by the International Court of Justice are mentioned (in the slides), together with other international involvement by the UN for example.

Boundary making is never a purely diplomatic/legal process and the need for geographic expertise in all stages of the process is outlined in the presentation slides. However, the International Court of Justice seems unconcerned about making proper reference to coordinate referencing systems. The UN Cartographic Section is often called in to support boundary making but has limited capacity to do so. These and other concerns are listed in the slides, together with recommendations that expertise

of NMAs should ideally be involved in all boundary making activities and should warn governments of the limited geographic expertise of some bodies currently involved in boundary making.

Questions	Answers
<p>Jean Dotse (Ghana): What does it mean to 'manage' and 'maintain' boundaries?</p>	<p>Martin Pratt: 'Management' is used in a broad sense to include for example, impact on communities of boundary making. 'Maintenance' concerns the more physical maintenance of boundary line delimitation (by monuments etc).</p> <p>Haim Srebro (Survey of Israel): Maintenance involves reconnaissance along the boundary checking condition. In the case of boundaries along rivers, the boundary will move with migration of the river channel. It is important to check that proposed developments near rivers will not impact on natural movement of the river channel.</p>
<p>Concerning demarcation, how are coordinates defined, with reference to what part of river, considering there will be seasonal variations in water level and width.</p>	<p>Haim Srebro: The two countries involved have to negotiate where the boundary line is. Sometimes a centre line, sometimes deepest part of channel (can be significant for navigation use). It is important to define what the boundary has been based on, as agreed between the countries involved.</p> <p>Martin Pratt: River extents need to be understood at the time of demarcation, but channels can meander widely over time and water levels can vary greatly. Also some have multiple channels. IBRI estimate that around 25% of the world's land boundaries follow rivers.</p>